

Dear Legislators,

This draft removes all sense of security for any sensible person that may be willing to become a Law Enforcement Officer. The keyword here is sensible. We all want a comfort level in our jobs. We need it. Our jobs provide the means to our and our family's lifestyle. If you strip the stability from a profession, nobody, no one of worthwhile will seek the position. You will completely the makeup of the profession for the worse.

Some of the language within this draft is absurd. In section 3, an officer can be decertified if "found that an officer's conduct tends to undermine the public confidence in police work". This is so vague it fails to provide a defined standard. A Law Enforcement Officer's job would hang on the tendencies of the "flavor of the day" opinions to judge them.

The draft also takes away tools such as equipment probable cause reasons for motor vehicle stops. I would venture to guess a large percentage of our drug/ contraband, warrant, and crime in progress arrests derive from equipment stops. And why would we not want motor vehicles stopped with bald tires, no mirrors, cracked windshields, dragging mufflers, smoking exhaust, no headlights/ brake lights/ turn signals. Don't such stops contribute to the safety of the highways we and our families all travel? From what I have heard from some Police Officers the most dangerous motor vehicle offenders already totally disregard our officer's attempts to stop them, as they are aware most police in Connecticut will not engage in pursuit under our current guidelines.

Why would we ban "consent searches?" My own LEO family member had discovered illegal firearms while searching motor vehicles. I have heard him comment on what might have happened to him had he not searched and permitted these people back into their motor vehicles. Why would you further endanger our Officers?

If you take away the tools of Public Safety, you take away the security of Public Safety careers. What do you think will become of our, the public's, life style? You certainly won't have improved it. Does the recent situation of C.H.O.P. in Seattle come to anybody's mind? In my mind, too much within this draft, given the time, appears to open the gates to just such a situation.

The Police have been put on a chopping block for the actions a tiny fraction of their member's. Do we lower the bar of due process in our courts because the first case of the day is found guilty? Do we put ankle monitors on every resident of a home because one of them was convicted? Of course not. So, let's not do that to our officers.

This bill would lend to tying the willing officer's hands. Our public would receive less protection from even the proactive officer as even these officers will most likely reflect on the personal situation before acting. Many good officers will leave the profession. I have heard that some eligible for retirement have opted to do so because of the negative support of you, our elected officials. If this bill passes, we will by sheer numbers be required to lower the bar and fill the empty spots with less desirable candidates. This reality will obviously cause an increase in just the type of occurrences hat have sparked this debate. The end effect of this bill as it is currently written, would be the exact opposite of its intention.

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna Veach
Councilwoman, Town of Berlin